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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
National Foreign Assessment Center

7 December 1979

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Iranian Military Readiness

Efforts to increase the readiness of Iran's military forces since the takeover of the US Embassy on 5 November have been minimal. The limited capabilities of the military forces are probably not the only reason for this. Khomeini's lack of trust in the loyalty of the armed forces probably plays a large role. [REDACTED]

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This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Strategic Research for the Iran Task Force. Questions or comments may be addressed to Chief, Iran Task Force on [REDACTED]

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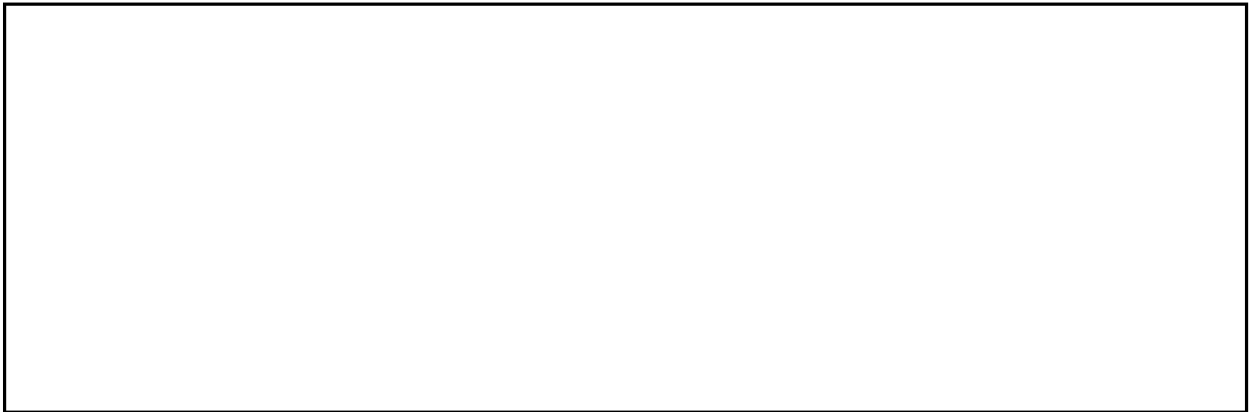
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The armed forces--the Army in particular--have been ordered to support Iran's new security force, the Revolutionary Guards. The Guards are still being formed and their involvement in defense of the country from external military threat is limited. Most of the approximately 20,000-man force consists of armed rabble. There may be as many as 5,000 Guards stationed in Tehran. Two units of 250 men each are considered to be "strike forces." They are well-armed, skilled in urban combat, and trained by ex-Special Forces personnel. The Guards dispersed to the countryside, however, have demonstrated their lack of discipline and military training, inadequate equipment, but high Islamic spirit. [REDACTED]

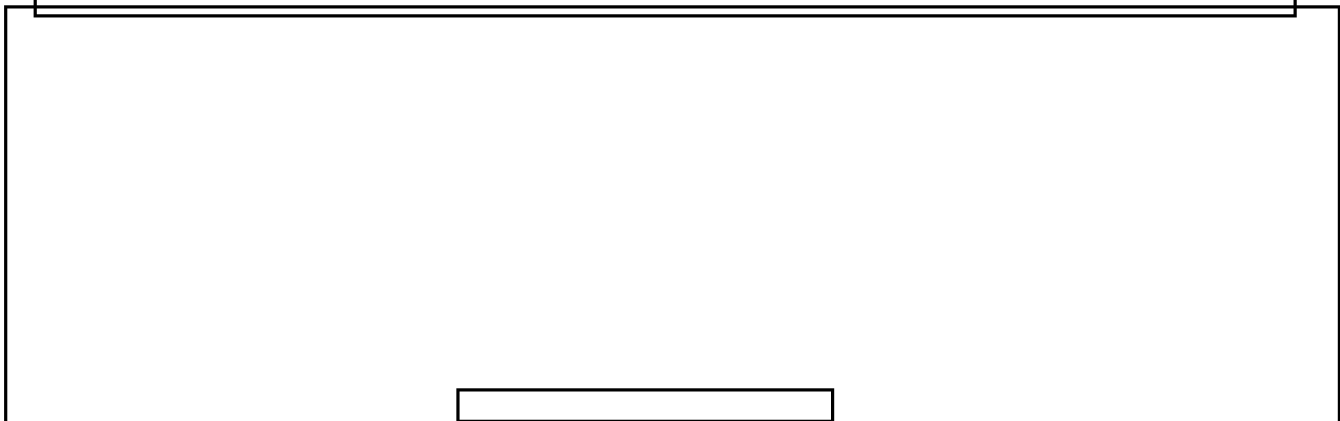
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Air Force

Air bases in the southwest have taken some precautions



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We continue to believe that all Iranian F-14s remain

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[REDACTED]
the Iranian technicians have only a limited ability to arm
the F-14 with the Phoenix missile. [REDACTED] only ten
Phoenix missiles are considered operational now. [REDACTED]

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Iran's F-14 fighters would be less of a threat to hostile aircraft and ships than its F-4 and F-5 aircraft, which are more numerous, in better condition, and more familiar to Air Force personnel. All 163 F-4Es could carry the Maverick air-to-surface missiles. Some crews are well trained. In joint exercises with the US in 1977, the carrier Midway served as a "target" for the Iranian F-4s using the Maverick. The Iranians performed well. [REDACTED]

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Iran's F-5s did not participate in the joint exercises although many Iranian F-5 pilots are accomplished flyers. Like most other Iranian pilots, however, F-5 pilots probably lack aggressiveness and fly in a predictable manner. The 176 F-5 aircraft, capable of carrying Sidewinder air-to-air missiles, are normally used in an air defense role. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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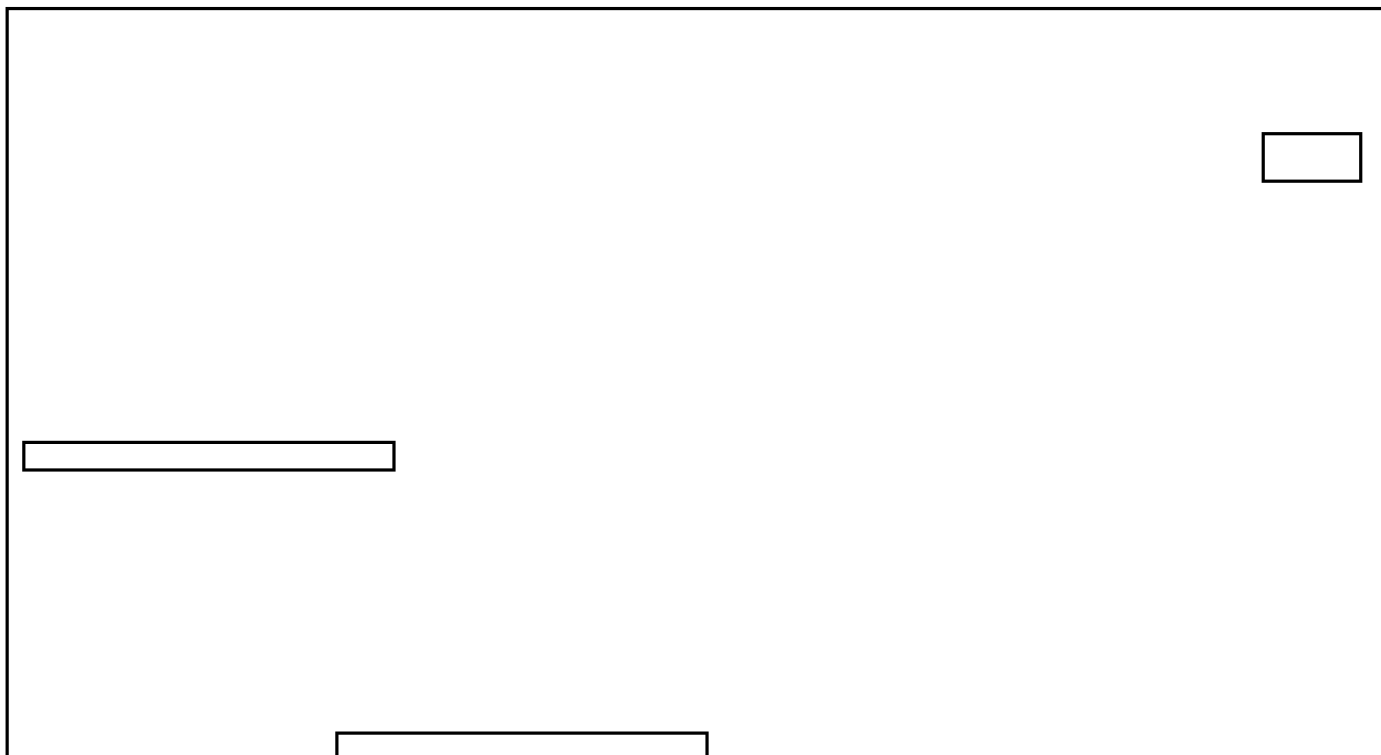
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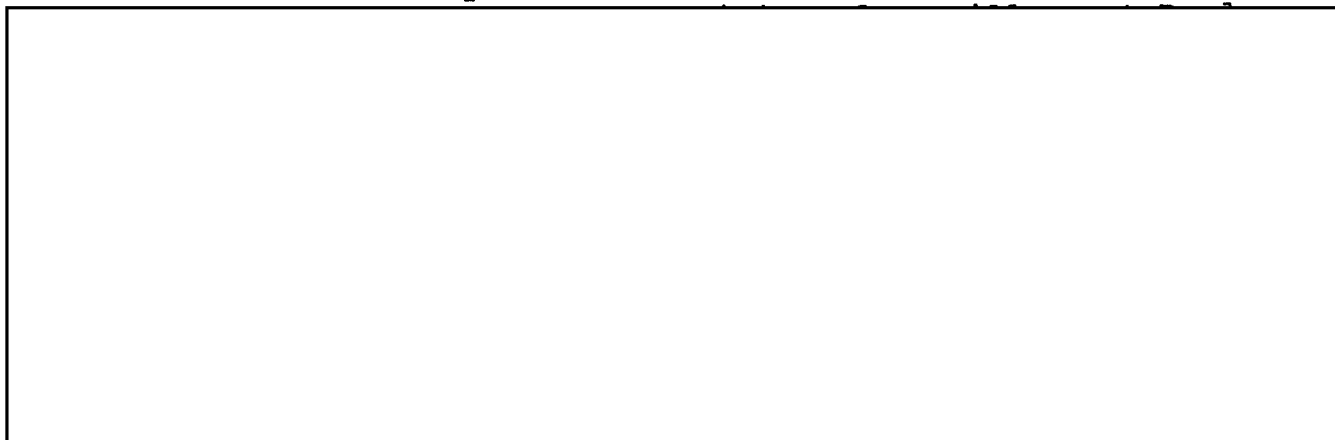
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frequently. The only unusual development was the virtual absence of F-4 aircraft visible at Bushehr since 18 November. The airfield--like the F-14 bases--has sufficient hardened aircraft shelters to accommodate the aircraft based there, and the F-4s, when not flying, are probably in the shelters. Photography also confirms the presence of F-4 and F-5 aircraft at Mashhad Airfield on 8 November [REDACTED]

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During November, there was an increased deployment of antiaircraft artillery at some airfields--particularly those



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Navy

The operational readiness of the Iranian Navy continues to be adversely affected by poor maintenance and lack of spare parts. Iran's nine French-built missile patrol boats have now become affected by the parts shortage. The Navy attempted to

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The Navy appears to be conducting regular patrols of the lower Gulf--specifically the Straits of Hormuz--and the northern Gulf and inland waters of the Shatt-al Arab. Minesweepers 103-class frigates, and motor gunboats appear to be the ships relied upon for these missions.

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the minesweepers have almost no operational capability to sweep mines. The magnetic signature of the vessels is so high that sweep operations would be dangerous.

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